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Indiana In the Mexican War

THE BUENA VISTA CAMPAIGN

By R. C. BULEY.

(Continued)

When it became evident that Santa Anna was coming north to offer battle, General Taylor began selecting his position. Agua Nueva was probably the best strategic position within one hundred miles of Saltillo. The enemy in advancing in a direct line from San Luis de Potosi would have to approach by the hacienda La Encarnation. To reach Agua Nueva from there the Mexican army would be compelled to cross thirty-five miles of desert. No water could be obtained in this stretch and the first to be had after crossing was controlled by the Americans. Another argument in favor of fighting at Agua Nueva was the dispiriting moral effect a retreat would have had upon the morale of raw troops, even tho that retreat were made to secure a better position. But these advantages all depended upon Santa Anna's approaching by La Encarnation and the direct road. There were two other routes by which he might with great exertion, reach the American army. To the right by La Hedionda, he might gain Buena Vista in the rear of Taylor's army; to the left by La Punta de Santa Elena he might attain the hacienda San Juan de la Vaqueria, which would control the road to Saltillo and cut the American line of communications. Either of these moves would have necessitated a retreat by the American army. Fourteen miles to the rear of Agua Nueva was another location, which, as early as the December previous, General Wood had selected

as an excellent battle site. This was the pass and plateau of Buena Vista.

The time from February 10 to 20, 1847, was diligently employed in reconnoitering roads and approaches and in drilling and disciplining the troops. General Taylor placed the camp and instruction of the troops under General Wool, whose long experience and skill well fitted him for the work. On the 20th a strong reconnoitring party of approximately four hundred, under Brevet-Lieutenant Colonel C. A. May, was sent to the valley in which the hacienda of Potosi was located, to ascertain the location of General Minon's brigade at Potosi, and, if possible, to investigate the approach by the La Hedionda route. It was thot that General Minon's cavalry was being used as a feint to blind Taylor and cover the movements of the main army under Santa Anna. Lieutenant-Colonel May was barely able to draw in all his outposts and make a night retreat before Minon's squadrons. On the 21st he brought to Taylor and Wool the news of the nearness of the Mexican army. These generals went into conference at Agua Nueva, and, when Major McCulloch reported that he had viewed a Mexican army of at least twenty thousand, promptly decided to retire to the "Pass of Thermopylae" near Buena Vista. Taylor's army, since being cut down by the regulars sent to Scott, numbered only four thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine men.²³ The whole movement from Saltillo had been merely a reconnoissance in force, for he could spare no men to hold a line of communications and fight. A rear guard of Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry and Steens' regulars was left at Agua Nueva to remove the stores and hold the place as long as possible. The remainder of the army retired to Buena Vista. The Mexicans arrived rather sooner than expected and the guard burned the provisions and retired during the night of February 21, fighting stubbornly until it joined the main army to the north. The quick work of the American generals deceived Santa Anna. He had hoped to get Minon's cavalry in Taylor's rear at Agua Neuva, and, striking with his main force, crush the American army. To do this he had been making forced marches across thirty-five miles of desert, and, short of supplies, he pressed recklessly on. When he reached his favorite spot he found

²³Official Report, *National Documents*, 1847-8, p 140.

only the retreating guard. Without rest, only a little food, and a single draught of water, the army now hurried fourteen miles farther.

BUENA VISTA

About five miles south of Saltillo, on the road to San Luis Potosi, was the hacienda, or sheep ranch called San Juan de la Buena Vista. A few flat roofed clay dwellings and a corral about one hundred and fifty feet square were the only buildings to mark the place. These blended harmoniously with the desolation of the surrounding scenery. Far away to the south stretched the plateau, bounded only by the mountains on the east and west. Cacti and Spanish bayonets were the only green vegetation to break the dull gray of the land.

The pass of Buena Vista breaks a chain of lofty mountains, which, running from east to west divided the valley north of Saltillo from the more elevated part around La Encantada. This valley is from one and one half to four miles wide. At the southern and narrowest end is La Encantada; at the north, the city of Saltillo. From Encantada a small stream flows northward thru the pass to Saltillo and finally to the Rio Selinas. The portion of the pass east of the stream was some sixty or seventy feet above that on the west side. It was also much broader and resembled an elevated table. The road from Saltillo to Agua Nueva continued along this upper plain for the first five miles, to the ranch of Buena Vista. For the next mile the road ran across a series of dry ravines, then descended to the lower level, where it followed a very narrow strip of land between the stream and the outstanding spurs of the tableland above. At the point where the road first struck the lower level, going southward, the strip of land between the first and highest spur and the perpendicular bank of the stream was barely wide enough for its passage. This point was known as La Angostura, or The Narrows.

It was at this site, selected by General Wool and approved by Taylor, that the American army awaited the attack of the Mexicans. The defensive advantages of the ground would enable the American army to meet the Mexicans on more even terms. The ravines and ridges would minimize the effect of cavalry and artillery and greatly reduce the advantage due to numerical superiority in infantry.

The Second and Third Indiana had been with Taylor at Agua Nueva. It was very cool on the elevated plateau and snow fell. Pitch pine was used for wood. The extended plain dotted with white tents and gorgeous sunsets presented a very inspiring scene. On February 21 the Indiana troops, along with the rest of the army, struck tents and marched back to Saltillo. The next morning, after breakfast, they marched out one and one-half miles and took up a position on the edge of the plateau.

The key to the field of Buena Vista was La Angostura or the Narrows. To prevent Santa Anna's passage along the road at this point Captain J. M. Washington's battery was posted. Supporting this battery was two companies of the first Illinois infantry (Colonel John J. Hardin) behind breast-works, and six companies on the hill above. To further protect this part of the field General Taylor placed the Third Indiana under Col. James H. Lane on a hill just north of the six Illinois companies and to the left of the battery.

Eight or ten ravines broke the plateau into long ridges or arms. As these continued across the road to the west they became steep-sided gorges sixty or seventy feet deep, and practically impassable. The most feasible way for Santa Anna to gain the plateau, then, would be by way of these deep paths cutting into it. With the Narrows taken care of, it was necessary for General Wool to look after the defense of these ravines. In the south part of the plateau three ravines running from west to east, led directly into the center of Taylor's position. Here the first attack would surely fall. Near the end of the southern and longest of the three ravines, General Wool posted the Second Indiana under Colonel Bowles, to support Lieut. John P. J. O'Brien and three guns. Gen. Joseph Lane had charge of the regiment and batteries. All the other troops were placed in relation to that most advanced position. At the left and to the rear of the Second was Col. Humphrey Marshall's Kentucky cavalry and a squadron of Second United States dragoons. They were to guard the passageway between the plateau and the mountain. One-fourth mile to the rear and right of the Second was Col. William H. Bissell's Second Illinois and a section of Bragg's battery to help Bowles if needed, and watch the second and third ravines. The third command

in this "stair step" formation was William R. McKee's Second Kentucky infantry and Capt. T. W. Sherman's battery. To the rear of these regiments and at the head of the largest ravine was stationed Colonel Gell's Arkansas cavalry in reserve. This ravine, the largest of the three, was known as La Bosco de la Bestarros. To keep the Second Indiana from being flanked by troops taking the mountain at its left, a battalion of riflemen was formed of two companies from the Second and Third Indiana Regiments and placed on the ridge overlooking the plateau. The above was the disposition of the troops at the middle of the afternoon of February 22.

In the morning of the 22d great clouds of dust to the south towards Angostura had already announced the arrival of the Mexicans. About eleven o'clock, General Taylor was sitting on his horse taking a final survey of his forces, when a note was brought to him. It was from Santa Anna himself, and stated that the Americans were surrounded by twenty thousand men and the only way out would be a surrender at discretion. General Taylor politely declined this summons.

Santa Anna's army consisted of twenty-eight battalions of infantry and thirty-nine squadrons of cavalry. The Mexicans possessed by way of artillery, three twenty-four pounders, three sixteen pounders, five twelve pounders, five eight pounders, and one seven inch howitzer. Besides these guns there were several large pieces not mounted that were drawn in wagons. Five hundred trained artillerymen manned the guns. All told the Mexican army numbered 18,133 men.²⁴

As the Mexicans approached the volunteers were struck with the fine appearance of the army. Lombardini's division came up in full sight. The men were in full dress, the horses gaily caparisoned, the battle standards unfurled, the infantry marching in perfect step, and the cavalry advancing as on parade.²⁵ Santa Anna began the attack with a feint along the road thru the pass of Angostura. Meanwhile, with a heavy artillery accompaniment, the Mexican light brigade swarmed up the ridge held by the American riflemen under Major Willis Gorman, to the left of General Lane. All on the plateau below watched this struggle. Darkness fell in the

²⁴ Santa Anna's official report; General Howard, *Life of Taylor*, estimates Santa Anna's army at 20,050 men.

²⁵Carleton, *Battle of Buena Vista*, p 56.

midst of it. Those below could not hear the rifles but could see the flashes. Major Cravens, awake by his regiment, said they reminded him of June in Indiana and the fireflies gleaming across a meadow. Shortly after dark all became silent save the enemy's triumphs. They possessed a peculiar melody to the Americans, lying on their arms, hungry, and shivering with cold.

Evidently the front of the plateau was too well defended to risk an attack there, so Santa Anna planned to turn the American left by getting a passageway at the base of the mountain. Under cover of night he planted a battery of five eight pounders in range to rake lengthwise the Second Indiana and O'Brien's battery. This battery was supported by cavalry and seven thousand infantry were massed noiselessly in the ravine, where they bivouacked.

Dawn on the 23d was announced by an outbreak of the Mexican artillery. The morning was unusually bright and clear, the Mexican arms sparkling in the morning sun. Flags and pennants floated in the breeze. The rattle of musketry, the crack of the rifles, bugle calls, the shouts of those already engaged higher up on the mountain and the screech of the cannon balls united to make a scene never to be forgotten by the Americans quietly awaiting the attack.

Major Mansfield of the engineers returning from a reconnaissance reported the exact position of General Pacheco's division; Inspector-General Churchill who rode to the left of the plateau to inform General Lane that the enemy was then coming up and across the main ravine in front, found General Lane at this moment the ranking officer on the plateau, as General Wool had gone to La Angostura to arrange for an attack there. General Lane immediately ordered forward Lieutenant O'Brien and his three pieces of artillery supported by the Second Regiment of Indiana volunteers. These troops advanced more than two hundred yards in front of the other troops, turned the edge of the third gorge and halted, O'Brien placing his section in battery and the column of companies forming into line on his left, with the front thrown diagonally across the road.²⁵

After the preliminary actions the Mexican infantry divis-

²⁵Carleton, *Battle of Buena Vista*, 56.

ion under Lombardini bursting forth from the ravine, gained a foothold on the plateau where, in column of brigades, it confronted O'Brien's battery and the Second Indiana. It was a trying moment for the volunteers who found themselves face to face with thousands of veterans in solid column, with their gaudy uniforms and showy banners. The manoeuvre by which the Mexicans gained their positions was well executed. While the struggle with the first column was yet undecided another Mexican column poured forth from the ravine and fell in beside the first. The attack of the Mexicans was met with steadiness and effect. In addition to the fire in front General Lane's command was being enfiladed by the battery of eight pounders on the heights.

The unequal conflict continued for twenty-five minutes.²⁷ The front lines of the Mexicans gave way but were replaced by others. The infantry fire of the Mexicans, aimed too high, did little damage, but the grape from the battery on the left was playing havoc; men were falling on all sides. General Lane determined to get his men out of the range of this battery by pushing farther down the ridge, hoping by this move to force General Pacheco back into the ravine, and get his own men in better range of the Mexicans. O'Brien limbered up and advanced sixty yards to the right and front, where the battery again began the slaughter. By this time the Mexican musketry fire and the raking fire of ball and grape from the battery on the left had become so effective that the Second, instead of advancing, as Lane intended, retired in some disorder from their position, in spite of his efforts and those of a number of officers to stop them.²⁸ In the midst of the action, Colonel Bowles, over on the right side of the regiment had twice given the order, "Cease firing, and retreat." The regiment slowly began breaking at its right, company by company until soon it was mostly a mob flying aimlessly to the rear. The busily engaged men on the left not having heard the order of Bowles had not noticed that the right wing was retreating. When they turned and saw that the whole right side was gone and the left starting, several yelled, "Halt men, for God's sake stop!" At this some hesitated but the retreat was general and

²⁷Carleton, *Buena Vista*, 58.

²⁸Lane's Report *National Documents*, 1847, p 182. For causes of this retreat and consequences, see Chapter III.

the enemy, led by a large force of lancers, was fast approaching. At last Lieutenant Stewart W. Cayce, then in command remarked, "It's no use boys to stay here alone; let's retreat." So the left wing followed the right, the balls raining around them and the lancers at their heels.²⁹

Whatever the explanation of this retreat, nothing could have been more unfortunate. Had General Lane's purpose been effectively carried out, it is more than probable that General Pacheco's division would have been cut up in time to allow the Americans to engage with fresh troops General Lombardini, before he could have crossed the ravine and gained the plateau. If, instead of retreating the regiment had pressed diligently forward, the success of the day would have been more complete, and many lives would have been spared which were afterwards sacrificed to regain the advantages lost by this untimely retreat. Had Colonel Bowles advanced bravely, instead of bringing the charge of cowardice upon his State, "his regiment would have executed one of the most brilliant things executed on any battlefield."³⁰ Santa Anna in his official report said that he had already passed an order for his forces to retreat, when the enemy, after a most determined resistance, was observed to give way in great confusion.

Lieutenant O'Brien unsupported by any infantry after the retirement of the Second, decided it was useless to remain alone and sacrifice his pieces needlessly, so he gave the order to limber up and retired with two of his pieces. The horses of the third were all killed or wounded, so it was abandoned.³¹

The riflemen in the mountain, who were about to be cut off, hastened down and most of them ran to the hacienda, stopping in the corral. Of those who tried to join their colors many were killed.³²

The Second never rallied as a full regiment. Colonel Jefferson Davis of the Mississippi regiment called loudly to those fleeing to return and renew the combat. Colonel Bowles who had given the order that began the retreat, now, having lost all hope of rallying it again, seized a rifle and followed by a handful of his men, joined the Mississippians as a private.

²⁹Scribner, *Campaign in Mexico*. Scribner was on the left wing of the Second Regiment.

³⁰General Wool to Colonel Bowles in presence of General Lane, Colonel Curtis, and Major Washington. Scribner, 62.

³¹Lieutenant O'Brien's official report, *National Documents*, 1846-7, p 160.

During the remainder of the day he showed personal bravery in that regiment.³² Taylor said, that with this exception, the regiment took no further part in the action.³⁴ It was this statement that later got him into so much trouble in Indiana. More than a "mere handful" finished the fight. While the Mississippi riflemen and the Third Indiana assisted by Lieutenant Kilburn were engaged in front of the plateau with General Apulia, General Wool was doing all in his power to rally the Indianians who had given way. General Lane, wounded and bleeding was likewise trying to assemble the scattered fragments of the regiment with which he had opened the battle. In this work they were ably assisted by Inspector-General Churchill, by Major Munroe of the artillery, and by Captain Steen of the First Dragoons, who fell severely wounded while on this duty. None succeeded so well, however, as Major Dix of the pay department. After riding in among them he seized the standard of the Second and asked the men whether they were going to desert their colors. He told them that they had sworn to protect them and now if they were still determined to do so they would have to return with him to the fight. He swore, that, with God's help, he would not see

³²These men again got into the fight and did good work. The following song of the Indiana Riflemen by John C. Dunn, Assistant Surgeon U. S. A. commemorated their service; from *Madison Courier*, May 1, 1847: Perry 160.

Up, up the wild mountain—
Up, up to the fight!
Hark! the bugle of war
Sounds far o'er the height.

The foe is above us—
In thousands they gorge
The time-crumbled cliffs,
Yet on they charge.

Though few be our numbers,
Our rifles so dread
Shall people the mountain
With wounded and dead.

Ram, ram, the dread cartridge,
Aim dead at the foe—
The cheers of our brethren
Resound from below.

Fire! fire! how they tumble—
Shout, shout for the State,
Whose young bosom sent thee
To war with the great!

Let her arms shine unsullied,
Her glory be bright—
For she opened the battle,
She ended the fight!

³³Carleton, *Buena Vista* 75. Taylor's official report, *National Documents*, 1846-7, p 134.

³⁴Official report of the Battle, *National Documents*, 134.

the state of Indiana disgraced by having her flag carried out of battle until it could be carried out in triumph, and that back again it would go, if he had to take it there and defend it alone. This won over many of the men within hearing distance. It seemed to quell the panic which had fallen upon them. Themselves again, they rallied, gave three cheers for Indiana, and gathered round their flag. Captain Linnard, of the topographical engineers, who had been active in assisting Major Dix in putting the men in order as they came together, obtained a fife and drum and directed the national quickstep to be played. Major Dix led off with the flag, while the captain brought up the rear and they directed their steps toward Colonel Davis's and Colonel Lane's (3d) regiments back in the battle.⁸² All the rest continued the flight back to the hacienda of Buena Vista and some even to Saltillo.

While all this was taking place to the left and rear, the battle was being hard fought up to the front of the plateau. General Pacheco immediately followed up the advantages he had achieved at heavy cost. His cavalry advanced from its cover and pressed forward on the right of his infantry, while General Lombardini succeeded at the same time in crossing the ravine and uniting with them.

The Kentucky cavalry, placed to the left of where the Second Indiana had been, retired to join Colonel Gell on the other side of La Bosca. Only three regiments, all seriously weakened by detachments left behind Saltillo and on the mountain stood between the Mexicans and Washington's battery at the pass. These were Bissell's Second Illinois, McKee's Second Kentucky, and Hardin's First Illinois. The Mexican general half wheeled his line to the left and it seemed as if these regiments would have to go the same way as the Second Indiana. But General Wool kept a cool head. As Bissell fell back Hardin and McKee advanced on the run to meet him. The three regiments formed in line with Bragg's and Sherman's batteries.

The enemy charged with a roar, but the line held and the struggle became one of endurance. The Mexicans crossed La Bosca and pushed back the two regiments of Kentucky and

⁸²Carleton, *Buena Vista*, 82.

Arkansas horse, under Colonels Marshall and Gell. Colonel Gell refused to yield and died sword in hand.

About eight o'clock General Taylor arrived on the field. He had been in Saltillo providing against an attack on his provisions, and returned just in time. To all appearances his army had lost the day. The American left was turned, their cavalry beaten back and only one thin line intervened between Lombardini's masses and the pass of Angostura. General Minon's cavalry had got around to the rear and were between the Hacienda of Buena Vista and Saltillo.

Undismayed, Taylor ordered Col. James H. Lane and the Third Indiana, which had been held in reserve, to join Colonel Davis and the remains of the Second Indiana and crush Pacheco's flank. On the double-quick, about two hundred of the Second Indiana (those rallied by Dix) under their Lieutenant-Colonel William R. Haddon, met Davis, and without halting formed on his left. After a long run the three regiments hit Pacheco's column while it was engaged in front by Hardin, McKee and Bissell. The Mexicans were soon forced to retreat in the utmost disorder. The Indianians sent out a detail to bring in the wounded from the ravines where they found the "barbarians" cruelly butchering the wounded and stripping their bodies.⁸⁸

About this time Saltillo was attacked by the two thousand lancers under Minon but the attack was repulsed. Simultaneously a charge was made by a large body of lancers on the provision train at the ranch, and several companies of Arkansas and Kentucky cavalry were forced to fall back. An extended line then rushed down expecting to rob the wounded and sack the wagons. Checked by the fire from the Indiana rifle battalion, the Arkansas troops and First dragoons, they gave way, being pursued by May's dragoons, and a part of Bragg's battery. The Mexicans were driven along the foot of the mountain into a gorge where they joined a force which the Mississippians, aided by the Second Indiana and a twelve pound howitzer, had been engaging with great success. This part of the Mexican army was now in a critical position. To the left was Colonel May and two guns. On the right were three more pieces of Sherman's battery, the Indianians and

⁸⁸Scribner, *Campaign in Mexico*, 63.

Mississippians. At this point, with a brilliant victory over the 3,000 men in sight, the men received an order to cease hostilities, as a flag of truce had arrived. They ceased firing and under cover of the flag the extreme Mexican wing succeeded in joining the remainder of the army.

By two o'clock nearly all of the plateau was in the possession of the Americans. The men took advantage of the quiet to rest, lying on their arms, about their colors. But Santa Anna was marshalling his men for a final charge which he was able to make with 12,000 men. Colonels Hardin and McKee were now over to the southeast part of the plateau where the Second Indiana had been early in the morning. Both their regiments were routed by this Mexican attack in which Colonels Hardin, McKee and young Henry Clay were killed. The broken regiments retreated down a ravine opening into the pass where they were protected by Washington's breastworks and the battery. Their pursuers were exposed to its fire and driven back with loss. The rest of the American artillery took a position on the plateau, covered by the Mississippi and Third Indiana regiments.

Taylor ordered Bragg, Davis and Colonel Lane to recross La Bosca and fall upon the flank of the enemy, who at once came charging down in all their splendor. The Americans formed into a V, the Third Indiana on the right, the Mississippians and Second Indiana forming the angle. While standing there awaiting the approaching enemy Colonel Davis called out, "Hold your fire men, until they get close then give it to them."⁸⁷ The oncoming Mexicans made an imposing appearance with their long columns, glittering lances and richly colored banners. A white-horse company, wearing brass-mounted caps decorated in red plumes, galloped up with lines accurately dressed. At twenty paces they received the deadly cross fire of the V formation. Whole platoons seemed to drop. Every man took upon himself part of the credit and for the first time the men of the Second felt something of the glory and pomp of war.⁸⁸ Some, intoxicated by success, entirely overlooked the possibility of death. General Lane forgetful of his wounded arm rode up and down the lines exclaiming, "We'll

⁸⁷ Scribner, *Campaign in Mexico*, 65.

⁸⁸*Ibid.* 65.

whip them yet." It was a happy time. In a few minutes the Second Indiana, with the Mississippians and the Third Indiana were again facing the foe upon the ridge near the place where they were stationed early in the morning. The Mexicans had a heavy battery there and as the men ascended the brow of the hill they were warmly received, both by the battery and by the Mexican reserve of six thousand men that had been pursuing the Illinois and Kentucky regiments. They paid them back with interest and then fell back under the brow of the hill for protection and watched the shot strike in their front and rear.

Bragg's battery had come up in time to deliver the telling blow again the Mexicans. Without any infantry support he had swept the Mexican column that had driven back the Illinois and Second Kentucky regiments. At Taylor's command he put in more grape. "The first discharge of cannister caused the enemy to hesitate; the second and third drove them back in disorder, and saved the day."³⁹ About sun-down the artillery ceased and the conflict was over. By six o'clock next morning Santa Anna and all his unwounded troops were back at Agua Nueva, fourteen miles to the south.

The American losses at Buena Vista totalled seven hundred and forty six.⁴⁰ The Second Indiana lost one hundred and seven and the Third sixty-five. Captain T. B. Kinder of the Second was one of Indiana's well known officers killed in the battle."

Buena Vista was the only battle in which the Indiana volunteers, of 1846, got to participate. Quite naturally it attracted a great deal of attention in the state. The controversy over the conduct of the Second regiment was long and bitter. Buena Vista was fought over time and again in the newspapers of the state, and Taylor's charge of cowardice against the Second was made the paramount issue in the presidential campaign of 1848.

The next morning after the battle, February 24, 1847, those of the Second who had fought with the Mississippians joined their own regiment. Parties went out in all directions and picked up the wounded and dead, the dead of each regiment being buried side by side. A cross of staves was raised over

³⁹Taylor, official report, *National Documents*. 1847-8, p 136.

⁴⁰Taylor's report, *National Documents*. 1846-7, p 140.

each grave, three salutes were fired and the men left the field. Everybody was solemn and silent, and the joy of victory was mixed with sorrow for companions and friends who never left the field.

The following day scouts reported that Santa Anna's army was still at Agua Nueva and would probably renew the struggle. The troops were ordered to strike tents and return to the field of battle. Here they encamped greatly inconvenienced by the lack of blankets, knapsacks and clothing. In constant expectation of the long roll, the men slept lightly and had feverish dreams. Some members of the Spencer Greys of New Albany were crouching over the coals when General Lane came up and ordered Colonel Bowles to have the long roll beaten as a messenger had just arrived with the news that the picket had been fired upon. The camp was silent in slumber, and the men could be seen stretched out in the moonlight and shadow. The rolling of the drums spread from line to line. The white tent coverings flew up in the air and the men came to their feet with every variety of expression on their excited faces. After an hour they were permitted to lie down, but alarms continued

"The following poem, by Mrs. Sarah T. Bolton, on Kinder's death appeared in the *Indiana Steinel*.

Sing a dirge full of woe
For the noble and gifted,
For his head lieth low
And his sword is unlifted.
Sad requiems may swell
O'er the land that he cherished;
Storied marbles may tell
Where the young hero perished.
We may give him to fame,
But we cannot restore him.

Gallant soldier, farewell;
True, thy country has proved thee,
And thy memory will dwell
In the warm hearts that love thee.
They have made thee a grave
In the field of thy glory;
They have written thee brave
On the pages of story.
And fair Freedom will come.
Her sad tribute to render
O'er the low, silent tomb
Of her gallant defender.

Thou didst pass from our sight
In the hours of life's morning,
When thy pathway was bright
With hope's brilliant adorning.
In thy home, once so dear,
There is weeping and wailing;
But the sigh and the tear
Are alike unavailing;
For the conflict is o'er
And life's ties are all riven,
We will meet thee no more
Till we meet thee in Heaven.

all night. At last came the news that the Mexican army had begun its retreat to San Luis Potosi, and the troops were ordered to prepare to march to their former camp at Agua Neuva. The 26th was spent covering the sixteen miles to Agua Neuva. The road was covered with Mexican dead and the odor was sickening. Tents were pitched near the spot the men had left the week before.

March 10, the small army was ordered back to Buena Vista, as the water was very bad and the wind and dust so disagreeable. Even the horses were affected and died in great numbers.

At the Buena Vista camp the Indiana volunteers became much agitated over the statements that had been made concerning the retreat of the Second. They thought, however, as it could be easily proved that it was ordered to retreat, the matter would soon be settled.

General Taylor, taking Colonel May's dragoons, Bragg's battery of light artillery, and the Mississippi regiment left the little army for Walnut Springs, near Monterey. The Second and Third Indiana Regiments were left under the command of General Wool, a brave and skilled officer, and a good soldier, but a man who could not gain the affections of the men as could "Old Rough and Ready," who, since the battle, had been adored by the men.

With time the camp at Buena Vista was made very comfortable. The health of all was improving nicely. On the last day of April the whole division passed in review before General Wool and staff. There were seven regiments of infantry, two squadrons of dragoons and four batteries of flying artillery, altogether a pleasing sight.

The first two weeks of May saw much excitement in camp over the court of investigation concerning the conduct of General Lane and Colonel Bowles in the battle. Its purpose was to fix the blame, if possible, for the retreat of the Second. General Lane called for an examination on his own account and was acquitted with highest praise. Colonel Bowles, by request, followed his example and the charges of incapacity for performing the duties of colonel, ignorance of company and battalion drill, etc., were fully substantiated as well as the fact of his having given the order "cease firing, and retreat."

The effect of this decision was immediately felt thruout the camp. The minds of members of the Second were put at ease for the time being. They thot that all doubts as to the propriety of their retreat were settled, and that that unfortunate event, as far as all were concerned, was disposed of forever. Little did they forseer the publicity that it was to be given during the next two years.

On the evening of May 14 the Indiana regiments received the welcome news that they were to take up their line of march for the mouth of the Rio Grande on the 24th. The New Albany company received a request from home to bring back the bodies of their four comrades who had fallen in battle. This they first thot impracticable but later complied with the wishes of friends back home.

According to schedule, the Second and Third regiments of Indiana volunteers left camp Buena Vista for New Orleans, May 24. Before leaving, the regiments were formed in line and general orders number 295, issued the day before, were read:

Headquarters, Buena Vista, May 23, 1847.

The departure of the Second and Third regiments to-morrow under orders for New Orleans, there to be discharged from their military engagements, makes it necessary and proper for the General commanding at the time of terminating the relations which have existed between himself and these troops, to say a few words in relation to the subject connected with their conduct in the battle of Buena Vista, in which the greater part have done such good service. He feels that the moment of parting is not the time to look with a severe eye on the misconduct of a portion of those troops whose companions have merited and will receive the credit which a grateful people always yield to brave men; and the recent legal investigations caused him to regret that a fault of judgment in an individual at a critical moment should have been the means of casting a deeper shade than was deserved upon that portion of the Second regiment which has been censured. He feels confident that time and justice, which sooner or later regulate all the affairs of men, will single out and discriminate the bad from the good and give to the latter, without qualification, the credit which is due them.

The General regrets deeply that he is to lose the valuable services of Brigadier-General Lane, whose integrity and zeal and close attention to all the requisitions of the service have been so much aid to him in the discharge of his duties and whose gallant conduct in the field has gained for him the esteem and confidence of every one.

In wishing him and his officers and men a safe journey home, the General bids them adieu.

By command of Brigadier-General Wool.

IRVIN McDOWELL. A.A.G.

The First Indiana, during the Buena Vista campaign had been in camp at Walnut Springs. Its desire to get into the war was never realized and now it left Monterey for the states on the same day as the other Indiana regiments. On May 22 Taylor wrote to Colonel Drake and the First the following complimentary letter in reply to a courteous farewell note of Colonel Drake:

Headquarters, Army of Occupation,
Camp near Monterey, Mexico, May 22, 1847.

Colonel J. P. Drake:

Dear Sir:

Your very acceptable letter of this morning was this moment handed me. For the approbatory terms in which you have been pleased to speak on your own, as well as on the part of your regiment, of the existing relations between us, as well as the kind feelings which will be carried and cherished toward me on your return to civil life, when on the eve of separating and returning to your homes, in consequence of the expiration of your term of service with the government, has created feelings which are difficult to express, but which are highly gratifying as well as duly appreciated. I regret that it was not your good fortune as well as your excellent regiment, to have participated in one, at least, of the hard fought battles which have taken place since our arrival in Mexico, knowing as I do your and their great anxiety to have done so; in which case I am satisfied you would not only have acquired fame and honor for yourselves, but for your State and the country; but circumstances over which you had no control prevented it. All must know who are in the slightest degree acquainted with military operations in carrying on a war in an enemy's country, over long lines from the base of operations, which has been our case, that a considerable portion of the troops employed must be engaged in guarding depots, keeping open lines of communications, escorting trains, etc., which duties are as important, arduous and dangerous as the duties of those who may be engaged in battle, each depending upon the other to insure success, therefore equally honorable to all concerned; and I can bear ample testimony to the zeal and ability with which the First regiment of Indiana Volunteers discharged most of the duties referred to, also many others, as well as the fortitude with which they bore up under disease so common and so much to be dreaded by citizen soldiers on their first entering the service, especially when suddenly transferred from a northern to a southern climate, more by far than the balls and bayonets of the enemy; also your great desire to begin the advance; all of which is the very best evidence had you come in collision

with the enemy you would have done your duty and the honor of our flag and our country been safe in your keeping.

Be assured, Colonel, you will carry with you my best wishes for a quick and safe journey to your homes, a happy meeting with your family and friends, as well as continued health and prosperity thru life.

With considerations of great respect and esteem, I remain,

Truly and sincerely your obedient servant,

....

Z. TAYLOR,

Major-General U. S. Army.

THE RETURN OF THE VOLUNTEERS

The First, with a long baggage train, made its way towards Camargo and arrived there on the 28th. The next day it proceeded to San Francisco, on the Rio Grande. Two days later the regiment embarked on the "Corvette" and "Troy," and on June 5 boarded the schooners "Sarah Jane" and "Desdemona" and the brig "Fidelia".⁴²

The Second and Third, after a ten days march arrived at Reynose. From there they took steamboats to the mouth of the river and boarded the vessels for New Orleans.

At New Orleans the volunteers were well received by the citizens. Several public dinners were given and salutes fired. Among the mass of patriotic citizens was a liberal sprinkling of Jews and land-sharks, and they attacked the soldiers as furiously as had the Mexicans a few weeks before. By act of congress the soldiers were rewarded with script entitling them to western lands. It was these land claims that the speculators were after. They told great tales of the difficulty of procuring land warrants, as tho it were a very intricate and delicate process. Yet these men were so patriotic, so benevolent and accomodating that they were willing to pay as much as sixty-five dollars for each claim of 160 acres of land and run the risk of figuring out the complicated problem. General Lane had warned all not to sacrifice their claims to speculators, for they could dispose of them on much better terms in their state. In spite of this, many in need of ready cash, sold for thirty to sixty dollars, claims easily worth two hundred.

After they were mustered out at New Orleans the men left for their homes. Most came back by way of the Mississippi and Ohio steamboats. Indianapolis, Madison, New Albany,

⁴²Reed, *Campaign in Mexico*.

Brookville, and many other towns made preparations to receive in style their worthy sons.

The citizens of Indianapolis held a meeting at the courthouse Wednesday evening, May 19, to arrange for receiving the volunteers when they returned. A committee of seven was appointed by Chairman W. W. Wick to prepare arrangements and report later. The date of the return to Edinburg was to be ascertained, teams were to be provided to bring the men to Indianapolis, festivities were to be planned and funds raised. One month later the notice appeared in the *Sentinel* that three guns would signal the arrival of the men in Edinburg. At this signal the people were to assemble in front of Washington Hall for further information. Thirteen more salutes were to be given as the volunteers neared the city. In view of the uncertainty of the exact time of arrival no public feasts were prepared but the citizens individually were to entertain the volunteers during their stay in the city. At least eight companies were expected thru Indianapolis. Governor Whitcomb was to address the men. Ex-Governor Wallace was appointed chief marshal.

Wagon loads of volunteers passed thru Indianapolis for several days. By July 6 nearly all of the Indiana soldiers had returned. On Monday the 12th the funeral services of Captain Kinder, whose body was brought all the way from the Rio Grande, were held.

Sullivan county held the celebration on the 10th. The Honorable John W. Davis was the orator of the day. A patriotic ode, composed for the occasion, was sung by its author, Judge John S. Davis. It was estimated that five thousand people were present; two thousand were women.

A letter from Columbus, June 12, reported that the volunteers had all returned and were right side up. A grand dinner for the whole Third regiment, to be given by the Hawpatch farmers, was planned for the following Saturday. Cass county received her sons at Logansport, July 5. An address was delivered by Dr. Graham Fitch, an elaborate dinner was served by Captain Jordan Vigus and a reception ball given in the evening.⁴³

The people of Lawrence county anxiously awaited the re-

⁴³*Indiana Journal*, July 16, 1847.

turn of the volunteers. With the report of Buena Vista had come the news that the Second had fled the field like frightened deer. The details were not known. The relatives and friends denied it on general principles, but later reports confirmed the first. Willis A. Gorman of Bloomington reached home before the others of the Second and in a speech at Bedford gave the first authentic account. He told how the men, after firing twenty-one rounds had received orders to retreat. The facts satisfied the citizens that the men of the Second were not cowards. The Lawrence county men returned, June 30. The Bedford brass band and a large body of citizens met them at White river and escorted them to town. A barbecue was decided upon for July 6 and on that date some 6,000 people assembled in Foote's woods, north of town. The procession formed at the public square and then marched to the grounds where a fat ox was roasted. The welcoming address was made by Dr. Horace N. Benedict. Captain Henry Davis and Lieutenants L. Q. Hoggatt and D. S. Lewis responded.

The Washington county boys were met at New Albany and escorted home. The body of Thomas Barr was buried in Salem. A barbecue and celebration was held near town.

Brookville staged a parade on July 13 in honor of those who had been to Mexico. Early in the day people began to flock in from the country and by eleven o'clock the streets were crowded. A procession was formed at the public square by Major Borrow, and marched to the grove near Butler's Springs, about a mile from town, where the oration was delivered by John M. Johnson, Esq. Colonel Jonathan McCarty responded. Toasts were drunk, cannon saluted, and the band did its best. It was a proud day for Brookville and Franklin county."

The Spencer Greys of New Albany reached home on July 31. A multitude of friends lined the shore. Cannon roared and a flowery arch spanned the street. The Greys brought with them the bodies of Robinson, Goff, Stevens, and Bailey, who fell at Buena Vista. Their funeral was held on the 5th. Thousands witnessed the procession. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr. Holliday, but only a few of the crowd were able to get within hearing. As the procession moved to

the northern graveyard, minute guns were fired.

At Madison, the citizens crowded the wharf during the first two weeks of July, daily expecting the arrival of friends in the Third. During that time all the First and most of the Third passed thru the city. On the 14th the long expected heroes arrived. The news had spread that a formal welcome and dinner were to be given, and at an early hour the people from the surrounding country began gathering into the city. The companies were drawn up on either side of the stand, prayers were offered, and then General Milton Stapp made the welcoming speech. Colonel James Lane responded for the men.

Brigadier-General Joe Lane came in for his share of the honors. Many invitations were sent him to take part in the festivities over the state. He declined practically all. At Evansville, July 3, a dinner was given, welcoming home Indiana's general. The mayor gave the welcoming address and ended with the toast: "Brigadier-General Joseph Lane, the farmer, statesman and soldier; a worthy and valuable citizen; a brave and successful general and an honor to every station in which fortune has placed him."

Colonel Bowles returned with the Second to New Orleans. The *Indiana Journal* of June 3 reported that Bowles would remain in New Orleans and start a drug store and suggested that that would be a wise move. However, the commander of the Second arrived at New Albany July 11 and stopped at the High Street hotel a day or two before going to his home at Paoli. When next heard of he was preparing "as fast as health would permit" a full and complete account of his own and General Lane's conduct at Buena Vista. This account was to be submitted to the public at an early date.⁴⁵

TWO NEW REGIMENTS

Following the request from the war department of April 19, 1847, calling for another regiment of volunteers from Indiana, came Governor Whitcomb's proclamation of the 24th:

Whereas, By a communication from the Secretary of War, dated the 19th of the present month, which has this day been received, the undersigned is advised that the President of the United States has directed

⁴⁵From Paoli Telegraph, in *Indiana Journal*, August 2, 1847.

that a volunteer force be accepted for the war with Mexico, in addition to that already in service; and,

Whereas, The undersigned is, by the said communication, requested to cause to be organized in this State ten companies of infantry constituting one regiment, to serve during the war with Mexico unless sooner discharged; the said troops to be clothed, subsisted, organized, armed, equipped, officered, mustered, and inspected into service in conformity with the rules and regulations contained in the annexed General Order, as gathered from the aforesaid communication, and as enjoyed by law; and,

Whereas, The brilliant victories which have already crowned the arms of the United States during the present war are an earnest that its prompt and energetic prosecution only is required to insure an early, a just and an honorable peace,

Now, Therefore, I, JAMES WHITCOMB, Governor of the State of Indiana, in behalf of our common country, do hereby renew the invitation to the brave, enterprising and patriotic citizens of our State to respond to this call with all possible despatch by organizing themselves into volunteer companies for the aforesaid service, and to report the fact of such organization with the least practical delay to the Adjutant-General of the State. And in conformity with the suggestion of the Secretary of War that a place of rendezvous be appointed on the Ohio river for the several companies as far as they shall be organized, the ground near or adjacent to "Old Fort Clark", near Jeffersonville, on the south, is hereby designated for that purpose.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the State to be hereunto affixed. Done at Indianapolis, the 24th day of April, in the year of our Lord 1847, of the State the thirtieth, and of the independence of the United States the seventy first.

By the Governor,

JAMES WHITCOMB,

JOHN H. THOMPSON,
Secretary of State.

Accompanying the proclamation was general order number nine setting forth the rules and regulations to be followed in organizing the new regiment. As the company, only, had the right of electing officers no one need wait for special orders to raise a company. The personnel of the companies was to be the same as for the first three regiments with the exception that they were to have two second-lieutenants, making ninety-four members in all. The secretary of war suggested that the officers of the additional force were of great importance and that they be judiciously selected. The elections might be held as soon as the company was full without waiting the ten days. The companies were to be inspected and mustered in at Camp

Clark. To each man who had provided himself with six months clothing, twenty one dollars, or six months clothing allowance, was to be advanced. The men were to serve during the war, and all who served, or received honorable discharge, were to receive the bounty of 160 acres or treasury script for one hundred dollars. The companies which had not succeeded in getting in Indiana's first three regiments, if they still desired to enlist, were to be given preference over new ones. General order number ten specified the soldiers' equipment, which was to be practically the same as for the previous regiments.

Six companies were reported as filled to the adjutant-general, May 9, in spite of the busy season and demand for labor. Two days later, Captain Smith arrived in Madison with one hundred and eight men, mostly from Lake county. They appeared to be excellent military material.

The 26th was suggested by Major H. Smith, as a proper time to begin receiving the companies at the rendezvous. Captain Edward Landers left Indianapolis for Camp Clark on that date. The company was made up of fine healthy men. On the 8th this company had been presented a fine banner by General Reynolds, on behalf of the ladies of Indianapolis.

The Marion Guards, John M. Wallace captain, left Marion on the 24th. A procession more than a mile in length escorted them from town about six miles. Farmers volunteered with teams and took them to Edinburgh. All along the line they were patriotically cheered.

Lawrenceburg and vicinity caught the war spirit and raised two companies. When W. T. Baldrige had about filled his company, Ebenezer Dumont caught the fever and organized another.

May 30, the ten new companies were reported and accepted. Again a number of companies almost ready to be reported were too late. The ten companies accepted were: Captains J. M. Wallace, W. T. Baldrige, Edward Landers, J. W. Crook, Jesse G. Alexander, William W. McCoy, Michael Fitzgibbon, Ebenezer Dumont, Daniel Lunderman, and Landon Cochran.

The election of regimental officers for the Fourth took place at Fort Clark, June 16. Willis A. Gorman of Monroe county was elected colonel; Ebenezer Dumont of Dearborn,

lieutenant-colonel, and William W. McCoy, of LaPorte county, major."

The regiment, under command of Colonel Gorman, left New Albany about June 28, on the boats "Saladin", "Ben Franklin No. 6", and "M. B. Hamer". They arrived at New Orleans without adventure and five companies sailed for Brazos, July 7. The five remaining companies left on the 9th on the "Anna Chase" and "Sophia Walker".

Near the mouth of the Sabine river one of the boilers of the "Ann Chase" burst. No one was killed at once but two privates died during the day from injuries received. After the explosion Colonel Gorman, Captain Wallace and about forty men were landed in Louisiana. They did not believe the boat able to go further and expected to find their way to Galveston by some other means. They sent a messenger to Galveston to announce the arrival at the Sabine of the troops who went ashore. The schooner "Starr" was at once despatched thither with provisions for their relief, and to take the men on to Galveston. In the meantime the captain had patched up the damages and as the men on shore did not return, steamed on to Galveston. He reached that port one day before the messenger, the "Starr" picked up the men at Sabine and brought them to Galveston where it and the "Lavina" were chartered to carry them, together with those left, to Brazos.⁴⁸

The Galveston *Civilian* of July 21, in commenting upon the departure of the Indiana troops, said that they had been a quiet and orderly body of men when off duty and ventured that if they behaved as well in battle as they did in the city, there would be no more reproaches cast upon Indiana troops.⁴⁹

General Lane was assigned a new brigade which was made up of the First regiment of infantry, one company of Illinois cavalry, one regiment Indiana infantry, five companies of New Jersey infantry, one company each of cavalry and foot from Florida and five companies of Texas horse.

At the mouth of the Rio Grande the volunteers of the

⁴⁸For captains of the companies see report of Adjutant-General Reynolds, December 1, 1847.

⁴⁹From New Orleans *Picayune*, in *Indiana Sentinel*, July 24, 1847.

⁴⁸New Orleans *Picayune*, from Perry, *Indiana in the Mexican War*. The "Tom Jack" was used to aid these two boats as they could not carry all. *New Albany Democrat*, August 10, 1847.

⁴⁹Quoted from the Galveston *Civilian* in *New Albany Democrat*, August 10, 1847. Perry, p 215.

Fourth changed boats to go up the river. Colonel Gorman, with four companies started up stream on the "Big Hatcher", July 25. Lieutenant-Colonel E. Dumont followed with two companies on the "Colonel Hunt". The remaining four companies were on the "Colonel McKee" at the mouth. All were bound for the camp of instruction. But four men had been lost since leaving Indiana.

On the last day of July Adjutant-General Reynolds wrote to secretary of war Marcy asking information regarding the acceptance of additional companies from Indiana. Captain Philip P. Barbour of New Harmony thot that he could raise a company in a short time and wanted to know if the same would be acceptable. The Cass County volunteers, formerly of the First Indiana, desired to fill their ranks and return to the service. Lieutenant Henry R. Scall of Monroe county, who fought in Major Gorman's rifle battalion at Buena Vista, wished to know whether a mounted rifle company, or one on foot would be accepted and attached to the Fourth. Mr. F. P. Bradley of Daviess county was anxious to raise a company to serve during the war, and desired to know if it would be accepted, and if so, how they would be furnished with the means of reaching the seat of war, and furnishing their own horses, what would be the pay of the various officers and privates, and compensation for horses. Mr. Allen Wilson of Putnam wanted to know whether a light horse company would be received and mustered into service for a term of one year from the 20th of September.

To these requests Secretary Marcy replied, August 11, that the war was not deemed to require, at the time, the additional forces offered from Indiana. Nor could the war department, with propriety encourage the men to raise companies when there was no certainty that they would be received.

In August 1847, a young West Point graduate of Liberty, Indiana, received the appointment of second-lieutenant in Company G, Second regiment artillery. His name was Ambrose E. Burnside. This was the beginning of a military career which culminated in the command of the army of the Potomac fifteen years later. Lieutenant Burnside later became governor of Rhode Island and United States senator.

Hardly two weeks after Secretary Marcy's letter stating that there was no definite prospect for the acceptance of more troops from Indiana, the President granted Colonel James H. Lane of Lawrenceburg, permission to raise a volunteer regiment to be composed principally of officers and men of the Indiana regiments which had previously served in Mexico. The governor was requested to aid in raising the regiment and to designate a place of rendezvous.

In his proclamation Governor Whitcomb invited the patriotic officers and men who had formerly served against Mexico, and such other citizens as would be necessary to complete their numbers, to proceed and organize volunteer companies with all despatch, to serve during the war.⁵⁰ The general order number fourteen, for the organization of the Fifth, set forth regulations identical to those issued for the Fourth. As the authority to raise the regiment was given to Colonel Lane, all companies had to be accepted by him before they could be considered a part of the regiment. In case a company was completed with new recruits, and veterans applied, the last enrolled of the new men would be dropped in favor of the former soldiers. This rule was to hold until the company started its march to the rendezvous. Colonel Lane said that he hoped to form a corps that would do credit to the state and place Indiana where she deserved to stand, the first among the first.

The new regiment was not long in filling. September 23, nineteen days after the governor's proclamation and the general order, the tenth and last company was reported. The companies were:

- K 1. Wayne Guards—Captain D. W. Lewis, Fort Wayne.
- A 2. Indiana Guards—Captain Horace Hull, Madison.
- B 3. Rough and Ready Guards—Captain George Green, Jeffersonville.
- C 4. Covington Guards—Captain R. M. Evans, Covington.
- I 5. Montgomery Boys⁵¹—Captain Allen May, Crawfordsville.
- E 6. Shelbyville Hards—Captain Samuel McKinzey, Shelbyville.

⁵⁰August 31, 1847.

⁵¹Succeeded by M. D. Manson when May became lieutenant-colonel of regiment.

D 7. Hancock Boys—Captain James R. Bracken, Greenfield.

F 8. Center Guards—Captain John McDougall, Indianapolis.

G 9. Grabbers No. 2—Captain Aaron C. Gibbs, Lawrenceburg.

H 10. Washington Guards—Captain E. G. Carey, Marion.

Colonel Lane asked permission for the acceptance of two extra companies to act as "flanking companies."

The rendezvous for the Fifth was Madison. The encampment, on beautiful ground just below the city, faced the Ohio, with a parade ground between the tents and the river. It was named Camp Reynolds in honor of the adjutant-general. October 1 was the date that the companies were promised accommodations. The tents, utensils, etc., were all on hand in time and the organization of the regiment proceeded smoothly. By the 19th all the companies were on hand and anxious to be off. Final arrangements for Mexico were to be made in Nachez. The election of officers took place on the 22d. James H. Lane, who raised the regiment, was elected colonel, Captain Allen May of Montgomery, lieutenant-colonel, and John H. Myers, major.

General orders from Major-General Butler directed the regiment to embark at Madison on the 31st and to draw arms, accoutrements and equipment at Louisville. On reaching New Orleans the men were to be transferred to the gulf vessels, if possible, without landing. If landing were necessary none of the men was to be permitted to enter the city.

The Fifth left Madison, November 1; companies E, D, and F on the "Ne Plus Ultra", companies A, B, and G on the "Phoenix", and companies C, H, and I on the "Wave". Captain Lewis's company, which did not arrive full in time to leave with the regiment was left at Madison until it could be gotten ready.

The day before the regiment's departure Colonel Lane drew up his regiment to receive its colors from Adjutant-General Reynolds. Colonel Lane made a brief response to General Reynold's speech. The regiment passed New Orleans about the 6th and arrived at Vera Cruz two weeks later.

⁵²Perry, from *New Albany Democrat*, October 26, 1847.

THE FOURTH AND FIFTH IN MEXICO

On August 22, Brigadier-General Lane, known to his men as "Rough and Ready No. 2", returned from General Taylor's headquarters with orders to take his brigade and to proceed without delay to Vera Cruz. Lane's brigade, consisting of the Fourth Indiana, an Ohio regiment, a regiment of Illinois volunteers and the Texas Rangers, had been on the upper Rio Grande, near Meir. The Tenth and Sixteenth United States infantry together with General Taylor's command were left to guard the Rio Grande district. When the Fourth reached the mouth of the river there was some disturbance caused by a few who declared that they entered the service for a year only. Before the men could receive their pay they had to sign the muster roll which declared that they had volunteered for "during the war." To this the men replied, "Go to hell with your pay."⁵³

The Fourth, under General Lane reached Vera Cruz, September 16. The men were agreeably surprised by the pleasant three days trip and the beautiful mountain scenery around the city. The men expected to leave in a couple of days for the city of Mexico.

Toward the latter part of September Lane's brigade passed National Bridge, Mexico. His entire force consisted of about 3,000 men. The only opposition met was from guerrilla parties and ambuscades. October 12, General Lane succeeded Colonel Childs in the command of Puebla. He drove out the guerrillas, proclaimed martial law and established order.⁵⁴

On the 9th a part of Lane's forces engaged the enemy under Santa Anna, at the city of Huamantla. Colonel Gorman's regiment, the Fourth Indiana, entered the west side of the city, and succeeded in routing the main body of the enemy and then proceeded to disperse the groups still remaining in the city. The colors of the regiment were placed on the arsenal.⁵⁵ October 18, Lane's forces, including the Fourth Indiana, engaged in a running fight with the Mexicans under General Rea. The cavalry pursued the enemy to Atlixco, where they took refuge. Lane was afraid to risk a street fight in a strange city so placed

⁵³Madison *Courier*, October 2, from Louisville *Courier*, September 28, 1847. Perry p 228.

⁵⁴Report of General Lane. *National Documents*, 1846-7, p 476.

⁵⁵Lane's report of October 18, 1847, *National Documents*, p 477-8.

his battery on a hill overlooking the place and bombarded it. The Americans entered the city without trouble. A quantity of arms and ammunition was found and destroyed. The Mexican loss was two hundred and nineteen killed and three hundred wounded.⁵⁶

Colonel Willis A. Gorman wrote home, January 25, 1848.⁵⁷ The Fourth was still in Puebla, in excellent health and spirits. General Lane was out around Orizaba, Tehuacan, Cordova and vicinity chastizing the guerrillas. Colonel Gorman was left in command of the forces in the city, which besides his own regiment, included a regiment and five companies of Ohio men, four companies of the Fourth artillery, and some Louisiana and Florida volunteers. The troops were well fed with the best that the country afforded. Among the principal items of daily consumption were fresh and salt beef, pork and mutton, flour, rice, corn meal and beans, sugar, coffee and candles with plenty of soap, salt and vinegar. Quarters were established in churches of roomy dimensions and splendid architecture.⁵⁸

From Vera Cruz the Fifth started for the City of Mexico. The march was a tiresome one, as only two halts were made, one of four days at Jalapa and a brief stop at Puebla. Not counting the halts, the march took fourteen days, sometimes at the rate of twenty-five miles per day over roads paved with stone. The Fifth arrived at the Mexican capital, December 17, 1847.

By January the health of the regiment had become affected by the confinement in the city. The men hoped soon to go to their tents at Molino del Rey. By the middle of the month there were from one to three funerals in the regiment every day.⁵⁹ The prevailing diseases were measles and dysentery, which, when combined, were usually fatal.

By March the sickness in the Fifth had decreased. There were but fifteen or sixteen on the sick list which had formerly numbered as high as one hundred and thirty. Colonel Lane was paying quite a bit of attention to the details of military

⁵⁶Lane's official report, *National Documents* p 481.

⁵⁷Letter to *Indiana Sentinel*, April 1, 1848.

⁵⁸Letter from Alexander McClelland, February 20, 1848. In *Indiana Sentinel*, April 8, 1848.

⁵⁹Letter from Captain H. Hull, City of Mexico, January 4, 1848. In *Madison Banner*, March 1, 1848. Perry, p 271.

duty and the men had become very proficient at all the intricate evolutions of drill, etc. The Fourth regiment had also become very well disciplined and about as good as a regiment of the regular army."⁶⁰

THE STATE HONORS THE VOLUNTEERS

The legislature of 1848 took up the work of reforming the militia of the state, rewarding the adjutant-general, honoring the returned veterans and solving the various problems that had grown out of the war.

In January a sword was voted to General Joseph Lane, as a token of the state's appreciation of his services in Mexico. February 10 resolutions were passed recommending the acceptance of the flag of the New Albany Spencer Greys, which had been adopted as the banner of the Second Indiana. The presentation and accepting ceremonies were to take place in the hall of the house of representatives on Saturday, February 12, in the presence of both houses of legislature, the governor, judges of the supreme court and officers of state. The thanks of the Assembly were presented to Captain Sanderson of the Greys for the gift of the flag.

The Assembly further resolved that the volunteers of the state who had responded to the call for military service, had nobly sustained the honor of the state and that the cloud which rested for a time upon the fame of the Second Indiana but added to its honor by inviting a scrutiny into its conduct which showed it to have been brave and dauntless in battle."

The presentation of the flags of the Second and Third regiments took place, February 12. That of the Second was presented by Hon. John S. Davis with a brief speech. Paris C. Dunning made the reply and accepted the flag in behalf of the state of Indiana. The flag had been presented the Greys by the women of New Albany. It came back from a year's campaign tattered and bleached, but the pride of the regiment.

The flag of the Third was presented by Captain Thomas L. Sullivan. It had been a present of the women of Madison to Sullivan's company and was adopted by Colonel Lane as the standard of the regiment. No slurs had been cast upon the

⁶⁰A letter to General Reynolds by an officer, City of Mexico, March 2, 1848, in *Indiana Sentinel*, April 8, 1848.

⁶¹*Documentary Journal*, 1848.

conduct of the regiment and the Third seldom missed a chance to flaunt this fact in the face of the Second. The banner was accepted by Hon. W. A. Porter.

In November 1847, Adjutant-General Reynolds wrote to Secretary of War Marcy, inquiring whether the United States government would defray the expenses he had incurred in organizing the new troops. This work had taken several weeks of his time and \$125.00 of his own funds. Added to this was his office rent of \$43.33 and a fuel, light, and stationery bill of \$28.75. His salary was \$100 leaving a personal outlay of \$97.08. Secretary Marcy replied that nothing could be allowed at that time as the resolution of March 3, 1846 was meant to apply only to expenses, incurred prior to its passage, but very likely there would be further actions taken on the subject.

Along about the same time the *Indiana Journal* made a strong plea for General Reynolds. It stated that the *Sentinel*, the Democratic organ in the capital, was not treating General Reynolds squarely. It had purposely left unprinted the resolutions of the Fourth, expressing gratitude for the services of Reynolds, until public opinion had made it necessary to print them. The *Journal* assigned as the cause the fact that General Reynolds no longer enjoyed the confidence of the Governor as he once had:

There was a time early in Governor Whitcomb's administration when no important measure was adopted and carried out without the approval of the best friend the people ever had. But since the Governor and the Messrs. Bright have been absorbed in State bonds, dividends, etc., General Reynolds is emphatically the peoples friend. He esteems his friends but he loves his country more. He is plain and straight-forward in his course. He would not approve of any mysterious juggling in the administration of public affairs. Should the war cease, General Reynold's influence will again be felt in the administration of the civil affairs of this State, and could he consistently leave his post and fill the place of State Agent in place of Mr. Bright, the public would be as well served and less painful conjectures would be felt as to the manner in which the interest of the State has been husbanded, and we conjecture that the Executive would find himself safer in the councils of General Reynolds than in the advice of his present favorites, the lately appointed Supreme Judges, Dr. Smith and Mr. Perkins⁴³

The General Assembly of 1848 at last gave a tardy recogni-

⁴³Report of Adjutant-General 1847, *Documentary Journal*, 1847.

⁴⁴*Indiana Journal*, November 12, 1847.

tion to the services of the adjutant-general. By an act approved, February 16, 1848, the \$72.08 for fuel, etc., was refunded to him, and the sum of \$150 was allowed for extra services in addition to his salary of \$100.⁶⁴

The quartermaster-general was also paid \$200 for the extra labor which devolved upon him during the year of 1847.

July 10, 1848, a number of boats with volunteers passed Louisville. The men were on their way home to be discharged. On the "Bulletin" came six companies of the Fourth Indiana. They marched thru the city and left for Madison on the "Swiftsure". At Madison these men awaited the rest of the regiment and the Fifth. All were in Madison on the 20th and after being paid were mustered out of service.

Wednesday, July 19, Captain Edward Lander's company of the Fourth, raised in and around Indianapolis, returned on the cars. The men were greeted by the citizens and addressed by General Drake. Two days later Captain Cochran's company, of Vigo, arrived, took dinner in a body at Little's Tavern as invited guests, and left in the afternoon in thirteen wagons sent from home.

Monday evening, July 24, the Democrats of Indianapolis met at the courthouse. James Blake Esq. was called to the chair and Nathaniel Bolton elected secretary. It was resolved that, as the Indiana soldiers had returned, and it was desired to give them a hearty welcome, Brevet-Major-General Joseph Lane be invited to visit Indianapolis at his early convenience. As soon as he should fix upon a time, a general invitation was to be issued to all the officers and soldiers in Indiana who had taken part in the war, so that a public manifestation of gratitude might be given them. Captain Landers was called upon and spoke eloquently to the assembled crowd.⁶⁵

The Center Guards, Captain John McDougal; the Covington Guards, Captain R. M. Evans; and the Washington Guards, Captain David Shunk, of the Fifth regiment returned to Indianapolis Monday, July 31. Arrangements had been made to receive them. A dinner was prepared at the hotel of Mr. Coats, and all were invited to dine there. General Reynolds met the cars about four miles out and informed the men of the plans made. At the station a military escort under Captain G.

⁶⁴*Laws of Indiana*, 1848.

⁶⁵*Indiana Sentinel*, July 25, 1848.

A. Chapman, met the cars. But the men were so anxious to see their friends that it was impossible to form them in line of march. A number, however, took advantage of the dinner, at the close of which, Governor Whitcomb made a short speech.

Friday, August 11, Captain Landon Cochran's company of the Fourth and Company C, Captain John Osborn, of the Second, together with a number of other volunteers, attended a barbecue on the line of Clay and Vigo counties. About three thousand citizens attended the jollification. The ex-soldiers were welcomed by Stephen C. Dodge.*

About the middle of September the people of Indianapolis began making plans for a big free barbecue to be held early in October. One of the members of the general committee announced that the Democratic ladies of the city would be ready, October 4, with fifteen hundred pies for the occasion.

Wednesday, October 5, eight to ten thousand Indianians assembled at the capital to honor the men who had been in the war against Mexico. A long procession marched to the Palmer House. There several hundred volunteers formed into line and all marched to the grove. Speeches were made by Hon. Edward Hannegan, Lieut. Col. Allen May and Thomas J. Henley. After dinner Col. James H. Lane, who had been delayed on the road, spoke on the record of Indiana's sons in the war.

In August came the news of the appointment of General Joseph Lane as governor of the territory of Oregon. By this appointment Indiana lost one of her most popular citizens. Many were hoping that he would decline the honor conferred upon him by the President. But General Lane accepted and the rest of his long life was spent on the Pacific coast.

Joseph Lane entered Indiana as a boy of fifteen, coming to Darlington, Warrick county. He worked in the clerk's office and a dry goods store until 1821 when at the age of twenty he got married. He then settled on a farm just across in Vanderburg. The following year, before he was twenty one he was elected to the Indiana legislature and had to wait until he was of age to take his seat. From that time until the Mexican war he sat almost continually in one or another of the branches of the state legislature. The war began while he was serving in the senate, but he volunteered and as a private came to New

**Indiana Sentinel*, August 30, 1848.

Albany in Captain Walker's company of the Second. When the election of field officers of that regiment took place Lane was elected colonel. July 1, he received his commission of brigadier-general and took command of the Indiana troops.

General Lane's record in command of this brigade, and of the new one given him in June 1847, was an honorable one. He was a favorite of the volunteers and familiarly known as "Old Rough and Ready No. 2". As a general, Lane was one of the most energetic, pushing, indomitable men in the war. No danger or labor was too great for him. It was commonly said that he had one great fault; he never slept, himself, and seemed to forget that it was necessary for others to do so. On the march he dispensed with drums and used the crowing of the cock as his reveille.

On his second campaign Lane's moves against the guerillas were so sudden and effective that he became known as the "Marion of the Mexican War". That title stuck to him until he left the state.

(To be continued.)

